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ABSTRACT

This report brings together recent research, analysis, and textbook evaluations to explain what lies behind today's school wars over teaching about religion. It concludes that textbook controversies involving religion are an important part of a large cultural debate. Some of the most divisive and important curriculum issues of current times, focusing on the changing content of educational materials in civics, history, social studies, and health are considered. Specifically, it argues that in spite of shortcomings, satisfactory treatment of religion does exist in some civics and history texts. The greater danger is to be found in the non-historical social studies, such as psychology and health, which include content likely to aggravate the culture wars, compromising religious-based moral principles as they promote new ideas of "self-esteem" and "caring." The document includes the following: (1) "The Context of Culture"; (2) "Religion and the Curriculum"; (3) "Textbooks and the Christians"; (4) "History and Social Studies Textbooks Today"; and (5) "Reflections." Appendices include: textbooks examined; sample indexes; and four examples. Contains 40 selected sources. (EH)

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# RELIGION IN THE CLASSROOM

## What the Textbooks Tell Us

Gilbert T. Sewall

A Report of the
American Textbook Council

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# RELIGION IN THE CLASSROOM

## What the Textbooks Tell Us

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A Report of the
American Textbook Council

May 1995

The American Textbook Council is an independent non-profit, tax-exempt research organization that monitors and reviews textbooks, instructional materials, and curricula in history, the social studies, and humanities. Founded in 1988, the Council endorses the production of textbooks that embody vivid narrative style, stress significant people and events, and promote better understanding of all cultures, including our own, on the principle that improved textbooks will advance the curriculum, stimulate student learning, and encourage educational achievement for children of all backgrounds.

*Religion in the Classroom: What the Textbooks Tell Us*

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Many readers may ask, what is my own prism of belief, a legitimate and perhaps crucial question in all studies that involve religion. I was raised as a reform Protestant and educated in the liberal arts and humanities. Today I consider myself a cosmopolitan and conservative in the Augustan tradition. I am not active in any denomination, and my theology departs from organized Protestant and Roman Catholic forms of Christianity. Yet on reflection, I hold, religious people of varying theologies understand better than many of the nation's judges and educators the social and moral confusion that results from religious neutrality and exclusion. Since 1991, during the course of this study, I have become more sensitive to insinuations and attacks -- both subtle and direct -- that diminish Judeo-Christian symbols, morals, and traditions that many school clients hold sacred and look to as essential guides in raising their children.

G.T.S.
May 1995

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Textbook controversies involving religion are part of a larger cultural debate. In covering religion's role in history and human life, textbooks touch upon sensitive and unsettled issues, both public and private, often with a moral dimension. History and social studies textbooks in particular render descriptions and judgments about the course of events, societal norms, and personal ideals, subjects on which scholars, educators, and school clients disagree, evidently with increasing passion and intensity.

American Textbook Council surveys of the nation's most widely used U.S. and world history textbooks found that these instructional materials do not banish religion from the classroom. History texts mention and sometimes explain the force of religion in the past. They have greater difficulty explaining religion's place in the modern world. What can students in the 1990s expect to take away from today's better U.S. histories used at the high school level? To begin with, they can learn that the search of English Puritans, Roman Catholics, and other Christian dissenters for tolerant surroundings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was fundamental in the establishment of the American colonies and Constitution, that religious passion in different forms shaped the thinking and actions of social reformers from the Abolitionists to William Jennings Bryan to Martin Luther King, Jr. In world histories students can note that in European affairs and culture, from Constantine to Luther, for twelve centuries, *Christianitas* reigned supreme, that Islam and its theocratic system of government swept through the Mediterranean and around Italy into Spain from the seventh century. The Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment challenged a religious way of looking at the world. Buddhism and Hinduism have shaped the cosmologies of diverse Asian cultures and remain profoundly influential in the lives of believers around the world today.

Far more disturbing was the content of "alternative" textbooks and instructional materials used in social studies and health programs at all grade levels, mainly indifferent toward traditional Judeo-Christian conceptions of virtue and apparently willing to substitute new and shapeless moral credos for them. Various non-historical subjects going by course titles such as psychology, family life, personal awareness, and self-esteem education are edging serious history out of the curriculum.

## The Context of Culture

The appearance and popularity of books such as James Q. Wilson's *The Moral Sense* and William J. Bennett's *The Book of Virtues* -- both sensitive to topics of religion and moral feeling -- confirm broad and rising public interest in ethical affairs. But controversies about religion's role in public life remain unresolved, as illustrated in the perennial school prayer amendment crusade and multiple textbook disputes, especially involving "values" and sex. The secular and religious speak radically different civic languages about religion in schools. They rely on different sources of authority, one legalistic, the other theological, to justify their views and prejudices.

Leading media intuitively grasp the importance and natural drama of religious controversies, which often involve education. Concern about the Christian right and its school-based activism is widely expressed in editorials and news reports. The education associations and the Christian right nervously make joint efforts to endorse broad principles of religious liberty, pluralism, and honorable opposition. They issue well-meaning declarations and call for cease fires in the culture wars. On all sides of the issue, however, extremists too often set the frame of public discourse. Militant secularists -- like the teacher who in 1994 resigned with great indignation over the minute of silence now established in the Georgia public schools -- won't tolerate religion in any form. Radical gay organizations -- exhibiting total ignorance of internal ideological and theological disjunctions in the mainline Protestant churches -- demonstrate against the National Council of Churches, asking it to "stop crucifying queers." They accuse Christians of pursuing "hate education" in schools. Millions of fundamentalist Christians fight the Darwinian battles settled in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and prominent, well-funded Christian organizations have mounted peculiar campaigns against textbooks, claiming that they have diabolical subtexts.

The Christian right's record in curriculum reform has not been a distinguished one. This can be explained, and has been, by sympathetic observers, who recognize that many fundamentalists are ill-equipped to deal with subjects such as history, philosophy, science, social theory, and the arts. Suspicious of modern knowledge, many devout Christians exhibit virtues such as courage or justice, but their educational prescriptions lack intellectual insight or rigor. On the other hand, conservative Christians deserve some credit for alerting a broader public to inappropriate subject matter and unsettled thought systems introduced into educational materials, especially psychology and non-historical social studies textbooks, where new lessons challenge or diminish traditional creeds, blur right and wrong, and tolerate base and self-destructive behavior in efforts to respond to social problems in non-religious, not-too-demanding, and "caring" ways.

The battle for the soul of the nation's humanities textbooks in particular and of character education in general has led to an impasse. Some school clients think that moral authority must come from God-given absolutes and Judeo-Christian canon. Others subscribe to values that emphasize secular experience and the capacity of humans to transform their lives as they choose. On the extremes the contestants are increasingly media-wise and disdainful of their adversaries. Each understands the importance of ideas and beliefs as determinants of prevailing morality, and each is convinced of its moral superiority in decreeing an ideological framework for the nation's children.

There are abundant flaws in the Bible-based curriculum vision of politicized Christian activists. But those who disagree with Christian remedies should first consider the modern spiritual conditions against which many believers react. Influenced by Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud, many secularists today automatically brand traditional religion an oppressor, opiate, or illusion. Modern theories of evolution, astrophysics, anthropology and psychology, they say, surely offer answers to human origins and nature as plausible as those obtained from the Bible and other sacred texts. Orthodox conceptions of Creation, Eternal Life, and Salvation have lost their power to capture the imagination of many ordinary citizens, who may not consider themselves religious but lead highly ethical lives. They are comfortable following moral outlines of the Judeo-Christian tradition, without belief in a Supreme Being or Resurrection. Others tilt toward Dostoyevsky's maxim, "without God, all is permitted," and act out accordingly.

One kind of contemporary secularist is Carl Sagan, the celebrated author and explainer of the cosmos. Sagan doesn't attack religion; he simply ignores it in his focus on mankind's scientific or technological progress. Other intellectuals dwell on religion's ability to do harm. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in a 1989 address at Brown University, denounced religion's "acquiescence in poverty, inequality, exploitation, and oppression" and "enthusiastic justifications of slavery, persecution, torture, genocide, and the abandonment of infants." While Schlesinger has been the defender of a pluralistic civil "religion" against separatist elements in multicultural education, for him religion proper has trafficked in "monism" and "absolutism," and has been, in contrast to relativism and tolerance, the source of many of the world's ills. Schlesinger's points are not without merit. Consider the Inquisition or the history of anti-Semitism. No one can understand heartbreaking and bloody events in the Balkans, in the Middle East, or in India today without acknowledging the dark side of religion. But Schlesinger's views are biased and incomplete. Against the historical abuses of organized religion can be put the ethical ideals that religions articulate, reiterate, and enforce. We need only to look at the deeds of people who have been religiously motivated, like Albert Schweitzer, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and

Mother Teresa to understand how religious impulses feed human dignity and aspiration. Each of these people has obtained moral power on a global scale, representing contemporary saintliness in a "secular" world. But indeed how secular? For people on all continents religion-based models of humanity and spirituality create civilized communities and assuage the questions and fears of human life. In temporal terms, the authority of Pope John Paul II or the *imams* of Iran bears testament to the indelible aspect of religion in public life.

For several decades, "people of faith" in this country have suffered generic disrepect in the educational and popular press. "True believers usually materialize as a strident voice in favor of a turn-back-the-clock orthodoxy as our only hope against the sinister forces of modernism and progressivism in education," the education analyst George R. Kaplan writes with scorn and sarcasm in *Phi Delta Kappan*, a prominent education journal. "If you aren't with them, you might as well be the Antichrist." Kaplan asserts that "clean living, solid academic grounding, and respect for the family" is a descriptor of the Christian right, whom he calls "paleolithic spear throwers" and many other unpleasant names. He concludes "there is the suspicion that elements of the Christian right, including some who are active in school matters, are kissing cousins of David Duke, the Posse Comitatus, and various other explicitly racist or 'Aryan' groups and individuals."

If applied to some other groups, Kaplan's vague assertions would be construed to be "insensitive" or even "hate writing." Such writings are "scandalous in scholarship" and "wild in accusation," several students of contemporary Christian politics and theology agree, yet Kaplan's defamatory views are taken as authoritative and credible by the education officials and professors who read them. Such alarmist writing thus influences and reinforces the cultural mindset of educational associations and their staffs, abundantly secularized, already on the lookout for Christian zealots and religious mischief. Policy makers who control the procedures, mandates, rules, and compliance orders to deal with religion in the curriculum will keep a sharp eye out for Christian extremists but will fail to understand traditional religious perspectives. *They will thus misunderstand the animating complaints and moral unease of newly awakened social conservatives and their force in American life in the 1990s.*

Many liberals and conservatives together recoil from religious tradition that they fear wishes to gain political power in order to impose strictly defined forms of conduct on everyone else, possibly through increased police power, censorship, and ostracism, thus impairing the freedom of individuals. Some also might be concerned by some forms of Christian revival that have a distinctly hedonistic feel, as in the Rev. Robert H. Schuller's reformed theology of self-esteem. While they may agree on these dangers, they may also be exploring and pursuing

alternatives to traditional religion. Many thoughtful Christians -- not only at the margin or fundamentalist in outlook -- feel distress at what seem to be new forms of paganism. "We face such jolts of desacralization and alienation in everyday life -- for example, when school life is separated from prayer, the singing of carols, religious imagery, and so on, on the grounds that such things are unconstitutional," the Roman Catholic philosopher Thomas Molnar has written. "The secular concept of the state certainly becomes purer and more precise; yet the entire civilization, whose constitutive parts are fed by many sources, collapses, as it were, from the elimination of the sacred from the public domain and its consequent relegation to the private sphere."

Powerful media icons challenge and mock older religious traditions. When Madonna frolics among burning crosses on MTV, her producers understand full well the power -- and appeal -- of desacralization. Profanation may be calculated to cause "shock" and "buzz." An April 1995 cover of *The New Yorker* magazine featured an Easter bunny crucified on a federal tax form. Raw, rebellious, and violent spectacles rush into everyday life, on television and in the shopping mall, replete with images that are primers of popular culture. They tumble into public schools, and more vivid than textbooks, provide graphic, unpleasant lessons about "secular" society, behavior, values, and custom. As a result, Christian parents seek -- as do Jews and Muslims, smaller in number -- textbook alternatives, and perhaps, private schools, where closed moral systems are protected by law. A relative (but not insignificant) few turn to home schooling.

It is easy to pretend that religion is only a matter of private taste, a "lifestyle," but any clear reading of history proves otherwise. From religions flow whole legend and lore, moral systems and aphorisms of life. James Davison Hunter of the University of Virginia has said:

> For the individual, religion provides a meaning system offering a sense of purpose and meaning, a stable set of moral coordinates to guide everyday life, as well as mechanisms to help the individual cope with the traumatic experiences of suffering, pain, and death. At the societal level, religion functions to justify institutional arrangements, thereby generating social integration (or in critical terminology, legitimating oppressive power structures). At this level, religion can also perform a prophetic function, delegitimating the status quo and calling for the establishment of a new social order.

Religion provides rituals and compasses, giving meaning and direction to life. "For the vast majority of people, today as always in human history, the ground of their morality is religious," Peter L. Berger of Boston University asserts. "Most of contemporary humanity, including most Americans, derives its morality from religion." Still, even now, in metropolitan America. The United States has a high percentage of people who consider themselves religious, whether or not they are regular churchgoers. The society is one of the most pluralistic and tolerant in the world,

and is unlike many other nations, where blasphemy can be a capital offense and interreligious warfare is daily bread. "Christianity" as defined by Protestant and Roman Catholic fundamentalists in this country has little or nothing to do with Christianity as practiced by its liberals. Within whole denominations and churches, there may be strong disagreement, as in the rift between the teaching of Catholic priests and the practice of their parishioners who use birth control. Judeo-Christian values still animate the nation's civic ideals. The nation still conforms officially to traditional religious sentiment. The president is sworn in with hand on the Bible, the state supports chaplains in the armed forces, churches and temples exist in a privileged fiscal condition, virtually exempt from taxes and government rule. IN GOD WE TRUST is stamped on all currency. Even today, no one running for president would dare admit to being a secularist. The president has to attend church, or if he doesn't, at least profess belief in God.

The nation's moral culture is rooted in Mosaic Law and the Old Testament, informed at best by Christian impulses of mercy and charity. About 85 percent of the nation's citizens are Christian in background; most adult Americans subscribe actively to some form of the Christian faith. Sixty percent of U.S. citizens identify their backgrounds as Protestant. At least a third of this group -- estimated variously at 50 to 70 million -- is "fundamentalist" or "evangelical" in outlook. Roman Catholics comprise another 25 percent of the U.S. population; Jews, about 3 percent. The Muslim share ranges, depending on the census of native black Americans of Protestant birth who have converted to Islam. A Gallup survey released in January 1995 indicated that nearly two Americans in three feels the nation is in moral decline. Many think the public schools are morally toxic, a condition that they link to withered religious authority in schools, coinciding with the popularity of alternative philosophies of life outside them.

As Stephen L. Carter of Yale University noted in *The Culture of Disbelief*, a double standard now operates in American society and culture, whereby media and courts, while reflexively sympathetic to the claims of ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation, for example, vigorously exclude traditional religious thought from respectable discourse on public life and the education of the young. In a 1995 essay, "Philip Rieff and the Religion of Culture," the late Christopher Lasch was correct to assert that any appearance in religion in public life is deceptive, as it has become neutered and ritualistic. Separation is enforced in the extreme. Of traditional religion, Lasch said, "Among elites it is held in low esteem -- something useful for weddings and funerals but otherwise dispensable. A skeptical, iconoclastic state of mind is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the knowledge classes. Their commitment to the culture of criticism is understood to rule out religious commitments. The elites' attitude to religion ranges

from indifference to active hostility. It rests on a caricature of religious fundamentalism as a reactionary movement bent on reversing all the progressive measures achieved over the last three decades." Unlike most social scientists or historians, Lasch perceived the quasi-religious aspect of "caring" and therapeutic clerisies at work in schools and other cultural institutions. These "elites" include many textbook editors, national and state curriculum specialists, and professors of moral education.

Do non-historical social studies textbooks and similar "lifestyle" curricula of the kind examined by the American Textbook Council acquiesce in moral decline by their "abolition of shame"? By rigid and official toleration of lax values and immoral behavior? Such questions remain a matter of open analysis, intuition, and speculation, yet multiple surveys of textbooks and supplementary materials examined in this multivalent subject area suggest that the answer is *yes*.

## Religion and the Curriculum

"If individual teachers or administrators do use the classroom to espouse their personal beliefs, whether those beliefs are Christianity, Judaism, any other religious philosophy, [including] secular humanism, they are violating the Constitution," said *Religion in the Public Schools*, a definitive 1986 guide published by the American Association of School Administrators. Educators, policy experts, and jurists affirm this aspect of public life across the curriculum. All leading civics and U.S. history textbooks reflect this theme of religious liberty. *This point cannot be made often or strongly enough, for in itself, it helps sustain a civil temperament that citizens of all faiths should appreciate, although the nature of secular humanism remains unresolved.*

What activates "people of faith" are orchestrated legal and institutional challenges that seek to expunge their deepest beliefs from the nation's schools. Organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Education Association, and even the National Council of Churches have been effective in using the federal courts to secularize public education. Many Christians of various denominations now believe that the ACLU and its allies have conspiratorially driven Christmas and all things Christian out of schools, a false perception that nonetheless has profound political repercussions. The religious component of Thanksgiving has been widely extracted from the curriculum, and Kwanza, an African harvest celebration, now seeks equal time in some urban schools. Some Christians believe that holy days are being consciously undermined by pagan counter-celebrations, and as a result of these protests, strangely, Halloween is becoming a taboo holiday in some jurisdictions.

Since 1947, when the constitutional issue was first raised, the nation's wall of separation between church and school has grown immensely thicker and taller, and that of course means the barrier between the dominant national religion, Christianity, and the classroom. In 1962, the Supreme Court struck down state-sponsored interdenominational prayer in the New York public schools. Government "should stay out of the business of writing or sanctioning official prayers and leave that purely religious function to the people themselves and to those the people choose to look to for religious guidance," said Justice Hugo Black, writing the landmark majority opinion. In the singular dissent, Justice Potter Stewart replied that the state of New York had done nothing except "to recognize and to follow the deeply entrenched and highly cherished spiritual traditions of our Nation." Thirty-three years later, the dissenting and justifying phrase *deeply entrenched and highly cherished spiritual traditions of our Nation* seems old-fashioned, even quaint, and surely, to many educators who direct the development of policy and curriculum, delusional. This is unfortunate, for Stewart's view apparently still has much currency among a frustrated electorate, responding in the 1994 midterm elections. Pressure for a constitutional amendment and other legal guarantees for school prayer has never disappeared from the political scene, and once again, like textbooks, it is a driving symbol for religious parents bothered by new school values and lessons.

Spirituality in the classroom has not exactly disappeared, parents complain. It has just taken new forms. The Ten Commandments are out. But the study of Native American creation myths and self-esteem pledges *to feel good about myself and who I am* are in. New personal awareness and "health" curricula promote values, ideas, attitudes, and authorities that challenge religious teachings learned at home. These lessons, parents assert, have apostolic intentions of their own, empowered by tax dollars, backed up by well-funded organizations, strategically placed and vocal in school policy and culture, that set the agenda in curriculum revision and the education of character.

Many teachers today believe -- incorrectly -- that they are prevented by law from talking about religion in school, let alone virtue or character. Textbook publishers, concerned by controversies and revenues, made matters worse by trying to move religion toward the edge of the lesson plan from the 1960s to the 1980s. (They have been much more comfortable with modern psychology and therapeutic "method" in crafting social studies and health textbooks.) Curriculum called *values clarification* and *self-esteem education* gained popularity in the 1980s. Many teachers turned to social studies/health/personal awareness lessons that challenged or ignored religion-based systems of morality and ethics, substituting relativism and radical individualism as all-purpose anodynes in schools increasingly unable to provide genuine ethical and spiritual answers.

In 1986, and again in 1990, critiques of textbook omissions from Paul Vitz of New York University and Warren A. Nord of the University of North Carolina gained wide attention from scholars and educators. The 1989 bicentennial of the Bill of Rights included renewed appreciation of U.S. religious freedom and the "first right," celebrated in the spirit of American pluralism and "diversity." Statements issued at that time by influential First Amendment organizations such as People for the American Way and Americans United for Separation of Church and State complained about the diminution of religious content in textbooks (in several subjects and at all grade levels, not only in social studies). The state of California responded in a nationally recognized effort to restore and amplify the subject of religion in the state social studies kindergarten through eighth grade curriculum, then under revision. (California's 1987 history framework for elementary and secondary grades included lessons on five world religions -- Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.) In developing a new series to fit this state content mandate, Houghton Mifflin produced a series that treated world religions in depth, and by common agreement, with success. At the California textbook adoption hearings in 1990, the books came under sharp attack from isolated Christian, Jewish, and Muslim activists who remain discontented.

## Textbooks and the Christians

Despite this progress, many Christian activists remain deeply disturbed by textbook content in history and the social studies. A few are upset because textbooks do not emphasize Christianity in U.S. and world history; many more because non-historical social studies textbooks acquiesce in or promote lifestyles at variance with old-fashioned standards of personal conduct. In March 1994, religion fueled a new kind of textbook controversy, leading Holt, Rinehart and Winston to withdraw from consideration (rather than revise) a new health education text in the crucial Texas state adoption, after organized Christians and other parent groups convinced the Texas Education Agency to tone down text and remove graphics (e.g., on anal sexuality). Holt's exit was an unprecedented move in the nation's largest state market. It indicated that mass-market school publishers were increasingly willing to downsize and abandon controversial areas of curriculum when they face the multiple demands of interest groups, increased sales costs, and changing state mandates, making some curriculum areas economically unattractive.

On March 4, 1987, U.S. District Judge W. Brevard Hand held in a 111-page opinion that 44 books used in history, social studies, and home economics courses, mainly in elementary grades, be removed from the Alabama list of state-approved textbooks. Hand came to his judgment

based on the grounds that the books violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment, as they neglected the role of Christianity and other theistic religions in American society. According to Hand, they promoted a "religion of secular humanism," described as a "highly relativistic and individualistic approach" constituting "a fundamental faith claim that assumes that self-actualization is the goal of every human being, that man has no supernatural attributes or component, that there are only temporal and physical consequences for man's actions, and that these results alone determine the morality of the action."

Thus, said Hand, these textbooks and the curriculum they embody are "striking at the heart of many theistic religions." Five months later, a federal appeals court in Atlanta reversed the decision. The circuit court found that the books did not have the primary effect of either advancing or inhibiting religion. It found that the books conveyed information that was essentially neutral in its religious content and did not project a message of government disapproval of theism. "Rather, the message conveyed," the court said, "is one of a governmental attempt to instill in Alabama public school children such values as independent thought, tolerance of diverse views, self-respect, maturity, self-reliance, and logical decision making. This is an entirely secular effect." Hand may not have been perfectly suited to the task in moral and political philosophy that judicial fate bestowed on him. Yet nearly a decade later, some legal experts, philosophers, and clergy suspect that Hand had some insight into the colonizing and proselytizing intentions of secular humanism's therapeutic arm.

Christian campaigns against secular humanism in schools have arisen largely from curricula and textbooks that "reflect an emphasis on the individual as the measure of all things and on personal autonomy, on feelings, personal needs and subjectively-derived values, all independent of a transcendent standard," notes James Davison Hunter. The "radicalization of secularization comes in the 'censorship' (by neglect or omission) of almost any reference to theistic religion in the description of American life and culture." According to Stephen L. Carter, "Even if what some religionists call secular humanism -- an educational philosophy characterized by an emphasis on moral relativism and the celebration of self -- is not a religion, it might properly be labeled an ideology."

An advance guard in the Christian battle against secular humanism and the pollution of textbooks was the Education Research Analysts of Longview, Texas. In the late 1970s Mel and Norma Gabler, Christian folk heroes, became eponyms of right-wing textbook "extremism" and "censorship" in the national press. Until well into the 1980s the Gablers were able to exert virtual veto power over the Texas Education Agency, the largest purchaser of textbooks in the nation.

Christian activists like the Gablers view secular humanism as a unilateral assault on sacred truth, part of a conspiratorial program of indoctrination in the schools to wean children away from God and moral right. "Humanism is faith in man instead of God," states one Gabler publication. It promotes situational ethics, evolution, sexual freedom, and internationalism. A 1988 Education Research Analysts manifesto maintains that secular humanism purposively fosters a Darwinian, anti-Biblical, individualistic, relativist, sexually permissive, statist, materialistic, and morally dissolute mindset among children.

The Gablers have done curriculum reform no service, from their deformation of the Texas textbook market in the 1970s to their specious crusade against textbook accuracy in 1992. Their indictments and eccentric campaigns long ago offended and alienated discerning intellectuals *and* "people of faith." They have augmented liberal fear and disdain of Christian complaints about educational materials. Christian advocates of many stripes seek to repair community disorders and fight juvenile anomie. The Gabler's brand of Christian resistance resents the loss of Bible-backed learning and character education in the modern world. Reckless charges and reductive prescriptions proceed. Other traditional and ecumenical Christians grow uncomfortable and embarrassed. Their coreligionists' misguided program for educational reform, they understand, gives succor to the enemies of religion. At the outer margins, these Christians provide an easy target for "Christian bashers" and repel non-religious parents who may share Christian complaints about school ethos and lessons.

The Gablers' populist crusade is being superseded by high-technology, computer-based, direct-mailing, action-oriented enterprises eager to make textbooks conform to what they determine to be "Christian" values in a "Christian" nation, making skilled appeals aimed at believers who are impressionable or ill-educated or who resist modernity. The Rutherford Institute, based in Charlottesville, Virginia, is the most active Christian legal group in the nation, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. Like other change agents engaged in political-cultural discourse, the institute tries to use the legal system as a lever of policy, and it funds itself through direct mail campaigns. The bulk of the legal work is done by a nationwide network of more than 500 legal volunteers, mostly conservative Christian men who share a belief that modern society has grown increasingly hostile to religious people. The Rutherford Institute is non-partisan only in name, using "worst case" stories to make "pro-family" appeals, and from sex education to parental rights, its focus is often on the local school district. In 1991 the Rutherford Institute generated $5.0 million in revenues from unrestricted public donations, of which $2.8 million was spent for "informational materials and activities that included fundraising appeals," a direct mail effort that generated a surplus of about $275,000 in income over expenditures.

Since 1990, the Rutherford Institute has helped to orchestrate a textbook war against school boards all over the nation, charging that an elementary-level language arts textbook series, entitled *Impressions*, originally published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston in 1987 -- which includes stories about witches and magic -- contains a demonic subtext. In this claim the Rutherford Institute was joined by Focus on the Family, which during the 1990-1991 academic year ran several articles in its far-reaching publication, *Citizen*. Citizens for Excellence in Education, an organization based in Orange County, California, and committed to Christian activism in school board policy, also entered the campaign. (Citizens for Excellence in Education gained attention during the 1990 California textbook adoption, as it objected to the lack of Christian advocacy in the Houghton Mifflin textbook series.) The *Impressions* series was developed in Canada in the early 1980s and was one of 17 programs adopted by California in 1987. Most of the reading selections were innocuous, and a few, charming. At the very worst, in the effort to be lively, up-to-date, and vivid, one volume was guilty of a minor lapse of taste in a parody of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." What happened in Walla Walla, Washington, and many other school districts between 1990 and 1992 demonstrates the intensity and wrongheadedness of some Christian-inspired textbook initiatives.

In 1991, in the Walla Walla school district, 2,769 children attended grades kindergarten through fifth grade. A local group calling itself Citizens for Active Resonsibility in Education, a group of 45 parents, objected to the *Impressions* series. CARE was represented by attorney John Herrig, who made formal changes to the school board, in the name of the Rutherford Institute of Washington, that the language arts series promoted witchcraft in its readings. Moreover, Herrig contended that witchcraft is an established religion. Thus, he maintained, the "use of the series violates both law and district policies that prohibit the promotion of any religion in public schools." On March 29, the Walla Walla school district heard an appeal to remove the *Impressions* series from district elementary schools. Herrig presented his charges to an eight-member committee, district administrators, and staff, who refuted witchcraft charges in a standing-room only local event. Threatening a lawsuit, Herrig reminded the district that a court battle would cost them an estimated $250,000. Within the week, a political scientist at a local liberal-arts college threatened to sue the Walla Walla school district if *Impressions* were removed from district classrooms. He warned that the ACLU was "taking an increasingly active interest in the case." Four days later, the panel unanimously recommended that *Impressions* be maintained in classrooms, a view that the school board certified several weeks later. CARE had by then identified 170 objectionable passages in *Impressions*, including stories that were "occult, fear producing, and depressing." The superintendent set to placate parents who opposed *Impressions* by offering to excise offending passages from the series or present alternative materials. The *Impressions* battle has now been

fought in many locales, including California, New Mexico, Mississippi, and Maryland, at great cost and to no valid purpose.

The Rutherford Institute, Citizens for Excellence in Education, and other partisan Christian groups have cited the following curricula as part of an agenda to undermine the fiber and wholesomeness of American children: drug education, death education, values clarification, global education, the study of socialism, the theory of evolution, and the look-say method of reading. In the literature of the Christian right, environmentalism, feminism, abortion, disarmament, and animal rights are also declared anathema. According to Robert L. Simonds, founder and president of Citizens for Excellence in Education, quoted in the September 1992 issue of *Rutherford*, "school has become a psychological, brain-washing organization headed up by totally socialist-oriented, atheistic philosophy." The New Age, wrote Simonds in 1993, wants to destroy children's faith in God, to help them to think that they are God, and to "open their minds to seances and witchcraft for physical and psychological euphoria, elation, ecstasy, wellness, relaxation, enhanced mental powers, sensory and physical sensations as well as stress relief." No doubt a few Christians really believe such things, but such inflammatory charges excite the ignorant and have the unfortunate side effect of allowing anti-religionists then to dismiss the devout collectively as poor things, ignorant or even deranged. To repeat, such rallying points on the political edge do not generally reflect -- in fact distort -- the normative desires of most traditional Christians in school reform, who are more interested in academic rigor, good manners, and human decency than in militant creationism. By chasing phantoms or worse, leading fundamentalist Christian organizations alienate non-religious parents who may share their distress about the moral confusion in today's classrooms.

Long ago, textbooks used in American classrooms contained overt Christian material and moral instruction, unsurprisingly, since much education was directed toward theological studies and religious vocation. In the eighteenth century the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Westminster Catechism were staples of the curriculum. Explicit exhortations on behalf of Christian piety and virtue strike the chord in early nineteenth-century textbooks, even those that are relatively secularized in content. Here is a little moral tale for students from *The Child's Instructor*, a reading primer for younger children published in 1808:

> A Bad Boy is undutiful to his father and mother, disobedient and stubborn to his master, and ill-natured to all his play-fellows. He hates his book, and takes no pleasure in improving himself in any thing. He is sleepy and slothful in the morning, too idle to clean himself, and too wicked to say his prayers. He is always in mischief, and when he has done a fault, will tell twenty lies in hopes to clear himself. He hates that any body should give him good advice, and when they are out of sight, will laugh at them. He swears and wrangles, and quarrels with his

> companions, and is always in some dispute or other. He will steal whatsoever comes in his way; and if he is not catched, thinks it no crime, not considering that God sees whatsoever he does. He is frequently out of humour, and sullen and obstinate, so that he will neither do what he is bid, nor answer any question that is asked him. In short, he neglects every thing that he should learn, and minds nothing but play and mischief; by which means he becomes as he grows up a confirmed blockhead, incapable of any thing but wickedness or folly, despised by all men of sense and virtue, and generally dies a beggar.

*The Child's Instructor* does not hesitate to direct and exhort:

> God loves little children when they go to church. When you go to church you must sit still, and hear what the preacher tells you; he tells you to be good children and love your parents, and then God will bless you.

The great curriculum builder and textbook author Noah Webster objected to the nearly universal practice of using the Bible as a textbook, however, in part because of its archaic language. He cut back on religious material in his schoolbooks. The 1829 edition of the Webster spelling book reduced religious content from around half to perhaps 10 percent. For a time the speller became the most common book in the nation, after the Bible. By the end of the nineteenth century, it had sold as many as 100 million copies. In contrast to somber primers, with extracts from the King James Bible, Webster's book delivered "constant reminders of all the good things that virtue will bring," according to Lorraine Smith Pangle and Thomas L. Pangle in *The Learning of Liberty*. "Webster fell in with a broad secularizing trend in eighteenth century thought -- a trend away from viewing religion as the only thing that ultimately mattered to man, and toward viewing it as an excellent, perhaps indispensable, support of human morality." Webster also wrote a "federal catechism," this being a defense of the Constitution and republican government and a predecessor of later civics courses. Through all this, Webster wanted to foster a uniformity of language that might help eradicate divisions and prejudice based on religion, region, and class.

For most of the nineteenth century religious subjects and Bible-based allusions in school textbooks continued to hold a prominent place. Then between 1870 and 1920 the industrial and Darwinian revolutions profoundly affected the curriculum in the sciences and in history. The "modern" discipline of history hence in place at least until the 1970s emphasized constitutional/economic/presidential history. One famous high school U.S. history, Todd and Curti's *Rise of the American Nation,* 1962 edition, contains very little information on religion in colonial American history and almost none in the national period, indeed less coverage than in U.S. history textbooks today. Textbook consumers and reviewers who have overly fond memories of the American history curriculum of the 1950s and early 1960s should understand that a secular, materialistic, reformist "progressivism" became the dominant interpretive strand of American history and social studies textbooks many decades ago, as textbook analyst Dan B. Fleming has asserted. A 1995

book entitled *Molding the Good Citizen: The Politics of High School History Texts*, by Robert Lerner, Althea K. Nagai, and Stanley Rothman, explores the sources of contemporary bias in high school history texts, confirming that for at least sixty years secular materialism has provided the dominant ideological linchpin in curriculum building.

## History and Social Studies Textbooks Today

American Textbook Council surveys of nineteen leading secondary-level civics and history textbooks started with the following questions: *What changes and improvements, if any, had been made in history textbooks during the 1990s? Do newer civics and history textbooks recognize religion's force and place in individual human action, in communities, and in cultures, past and present? Do texts describe how systems of belief deal with cosmic and human problems? Do history and social studies textbooks succeed or fail with such content?*

The Council later broadened the survey to study another genre of instructional materials closely tied to civics and character education: *Do "alternative" social studies textbooks -- especially those non-historical in content, e.g., in environmental awareness, health, psychology, self-esteem, values -- act to diminish or supplant religious sentiment in the lives of students? What changes are taking place in textbooks, lessons, and subject matter in the study of ethics, moral behavior, and other aspects of human life that have traditionally been religion's domain?* These were the main conclusions:

• The U.S. history and world history textbooks used most widely in high schools today cover major events and movements with religious dimensions -- including non-Western topics -- more thoroughly than they did ten or thirty years ago. Wide impressions that serious omissions of religion occur in U.S. history and world history textbooks on the market today are out of date. Such lessons exist, expanded in response to complaints from textbook critics and First Amendment groups in the 1980s. In major history textbooks introduced since 1990, coverage of religion has expanded, even though many passages examined remain imperfect on account of brevity, elision, and other problems.

• History textbooks seem to be more comfortable with religious issues, events, and conflicts in the distant past than subjects such as contemporary Christianity or Islamic fundamentalism. Texts rarely comprehend religion as a motivating force in a "rational" and "scientific" world. Students are asked to consider religious-based episodes in recent history as

political or social phenomena, perhaps as cultural artifacts or vestiges of a superstitious and intellectually repressive past, not as systems of belief that inform and move national and global events. Treatments of the First Amendment in civics and government texts take the nearly complete secularization of the nation's public life at face value.

• In history textbooks, world religions are covered more thoughtfully and completely than in the past, as developers of state content standards, textbook editors, and teachers pay increased attention to non-Western cultures and non-Christian religious traditions. This is a welcome step in content reform, although some world cultures textbooks now foreshorten Judeo-Christianity to emphasize Islam, for example, yet the same books elide unpleasant facts about contemporary theocracies and non-Christian fundamentalism.

In the history books examined, three general problems stood out, noted by more than one reviewer during the course of the American Textbook Council's surveys:

*1. Demands for inclusion in history textbooks persist in spite of expanded coverage.*

Historical events and episodes with a religious component receive greater coverage in history textbooks than in the recent past, the result of calls in the 1980s to restore a subject ignored. The most remarkable trend in world history textbooks in the last decade has been the expansion of non-Western subject matter and non-Western religions. These revisions have failed to satisfy sectarian critics, who are often more interested in hagiography and score-settling than they are in historical exegesis.

*2. Nebulous or inadequate explanations about religion abound in history textbooks.*

The strength of religion in shaping human thought and action is not often explained, and its role as a motivating agent of culture, politics, and ethics often remains underexamined. Textbooks try to sidestep religious-inspired hatred, especially when the consequences are dire, as in the Holocaust. Religion is almost always presented as a political or social entity, rarely as an intellectual or moral force with individual and public consequences. Since texts tend to summarize complex theology rapidly with an eye toward "inclusion," the passages on religion sometimes are hard to understand. In world history books, explanations of the globalization of Christianity from the sixteenth century -- to become the world's largest religion today -- is cursory and opaque in construction, dealt with briefly as one aspect of Western civilization's "cultural imperialism" or not at all.

Religion in the contemporary world is discussed by region, out of context, often in oblique and misleading ways. A textbook that considers world religions in earlier centuries with clarity and subtlety states: "The Roman Catholic Church in Latin America has played an important role in the drive for human rights by actively calling for social reform and opposing repressive military regimes in Latin America. Pope John Paul II visited many Latin American nations in the 1980s, asking dictators to hold free elections and to halt human rights violations. The Church traditionally has defended the political systems that are in power. This new role of calling for reform has made the Church an important force for change in Latin America and attracted worldwide attention." This flawed passage casts the Church and Papacy in a progressive political stance, employing a remarkable set of cliches and hackneyed social science. It gives no sense whatsoever of either Church or Papacy as a moral authority -- nor does it face the incendiary contradictions and competing philosophies within this intercontinental institution.

Textbook coverage of contemporary religion in the United States is uniformly scant, usually unsympathetic, and sometimes inaccurate. One prominent U.S. high school history textbook states, for example: "Many of Reagan's domestic and foreign policies were inspired by the beliefs of the religious right. He opposed the Equal Rights Amendment for women. He desired a constitutional amendment banning abortion. These decisions were supported by conservative Christians who believed in traditional Christian roles for women and who favored discrimination against homosexuals. Points of view other than those embraced by the religious right had little influence on Reagan's legislative agenda." What foreign policies? What indeed are "traditional Christian roles for women"? The last sentence? It is simply incorrect.

*3. History textbooks are flawed by presentism.*

In an attempt to help students make connections with the past and their present, comparative exercises abound throughout textbooks. The result is failure to appreciate vast *differences* regarding time, place, and culture. Presentism is offensive when it recasts the religious impulse in order to convert it into the secular experience of contemporary American youth, trivializing and cheapening the role of religion in the human past. For example, one text includes the misguided activity exercise: "Martin Luther's 95 Theses listed his ideas and criticisms of the Catholic Church. Think of ways your school could be improved. Write a list of 'theses' describing your ideas and encouraging your classmates to support your reforms. Try to include possible reforms that would affect everyone at school, not just you." "Compare the reasons," another world history textbook says, "for participating in a crusade against Muslim Turks in the 1100s with the reasons people today may crusade for a clean environment or world peace." The same

book asks: "Europeans who went on the crusades had many reasons for going. List four of the reasons. How might these reasons still be utilized in modern society to convince citizens to support governmental policies?" Yet another textbook says: "The most revolutionary idea in Jesus' preaching was his claim that God loved sinners as well as the good. Jesus assured his listeners God loved the poor, the suffering, and the social outcasts." Said one reviewer of this passage and history textbooks in general, "When Jesus does appear, he turns into a social worker from Galilee. Surely the most revolutionary part of Jesus's message was that He was the son of God."

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The chief problem in social studies today is not the failure of civics and history books to acknowledge religion's place in human affairs, even though there is ample room for improvement. The problem lies in another venue. Curriculum specialists now pressure schools to introduce *non-historical social studies* lessons that do not even include civics, geography, or economics, all of which, when properly taught, have a historical dimension. In some cases, especially at the elementary level, *non-historical social studies* actually displace history in the curriculum. These "alternative" lessons and courses in psychology, family life, personal awareness, and self-esteem training satisfy graduation requirements in social studies. They also cover behavior, personality, attitudes, and ethics through a strictly secular screen. As traditional religious precepts and moral guides have been removed from schools by custom, regulation, or case law, new principles of action -- likely to be non-theistic and self-referential -- take their place in student life and thought.

A large number of parents, especially religious ones, complain that the content of these courses challenges not only what they hold to be *sacred* but what they consider *private*. Non-historical social studies textbooks cover -- and offer prescriptive guidance on -- matters of culture and lifestyle. These topics often have a religious, spiritual, ethical, or moral dimension. Such textbooks and instructional materials often affirm and promote novel systems of action and belief with great confidence. Many educators and textbook creators pursue these new educations dogmatically, having themselves an emotional stake in "caring" therapies. Today's schools are increasingly expected to lend a hand in bringing up children who have not learned courtesy or comity at home. This general concern that spans the political spectrum goes a long way to explain the problem-solving, therapeutic "wedge" of the non-historical social studies, which challenge the gains for history education made in the 1980s.

Based on an assortment of these materials surveyed, focusing on four non-historical social studies programs, the Council concluded:

*1. Textbooks in psychology, human awareness, self-esteem, and other non-historical social studies challenge traditional belief systems and moral principles.*

Many textbooks and instructional materials champion "insurgent" values "largely concerned with the rights of the individual -- with freedom from oppression, from confinement, from hierarchy, from authority, from stricture, from repression, from rigid rule-making, and from the status quo," as Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall have described them. They are driven by sensitivities, none of them sensitive to religious-inspired morality, and in some cases, they seem adversarial toward older moral systems and apostolic toward their own. Their concerns range from sexual harrassment prevention to fighting drug addiction and venereal disease. They seek to build "self-esteem." Moral advice is almost universally couched in the therapeutic language of *respect, caring*, and *choice*, never in the stern vocabulary of *wrongdoing* or *evil*.

*2. Such texts contain prescriptive moral advice that some school clients are certain to find tasteless, perhaps offensive or profane.*

Social workers, counselors, psychologists, and nutritionists -- a faculty who are not much interested in history and civics per se -- seek therapeutic materials in schools that tolerate -- or even demand respect for -- coarse and hollow lifestyles. Moreover, these "affective" materials are usually inert to cosmic and transcendent issues that have perplexed and fortified civilizations since their beginnings, better studied through the lens of history and philosophy. They underestimate the power of religion in providing ethical guidelines and the force of canon in everyday human lives.

Psychology and health textbooks emphasize matters very private to most students, at least when they are in public places, like school classrooms. Objections by parents to sex education textbook content often involve something broader than religion. The matter may begin with religion -- since Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all teach that sex is a sacred treasure to be enjoyed inside the bond of marriage, and because certain moral principles are imbedded into Mosaic and other religion-based law -- but these issues extend to matters of behavior, decorum, and probity. *Many parents who are not religious at all seek to protect the innocence and morals of their own children -- and bridle at what passes for "realism" in affective education.*

These parents simply don't like curricula that convey a gloomy, problem-filled view of the world, very possibly, a libertine world in which promiscuity, drug use, various forms of depression and abuse, are taken to be basic, ubiquitous aspects of juvenile life. A leading health text asks students a "critical thinking" question: "Why might a person who has abused a drug be

more likely to get AIDS than a person who has not?" When critical thinking is reduced to understanding of shared hypodermics, what can be said? For parents who oppose condom distribution, for instance, and who expect their children to learn how to read and write at school, not how to avoid AIDS or behave sexually, such changes may be the single most alarming content alteration in the curriculum during the last decade.

Public schools operate largely on the principle of bureaucratic pragmatism. A range of contemporary lesson plans are designed to educate students in therapeutic "philosophies," social justice, and self-esteem to make students better citizens and people. They reflect profound and earnest faith in lessons and curriculum-based social transformation, crafted to the specifications of "caring" interest groups. But these forms of social studies and "values education" seem to other school clients, inappropriate, invasive, even blasphemous. Can it really be surprising that some of the latter act out their opposition to such curricula and textbooks in organized church groups and district-level school battles?

Secular bias permeates the sentiment of educational leaders and "cultural orientation of a larger category of cultural elites -- not only those who design educational curricula, but other arbiters of social taste and opinion," James Davison Hunter observes. The American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the Sex Education Information Council of the United States, National Council for the Social Studies, Planned Parenthood, Children's Defense Fund, and the PTA have strong views about religion, the social studies curriculum, and the non-academic mission of schools. In matters of curriculum revision and counsel, these are the agencies to which the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the American Association of Publishers, and the American Library Association tend to listen.

It is evident -- based on reviews of instructional materials in the non-historical social studies materials -- that social conservatives, Christian or not, have some valid complaints about the contemporary moral curriculum, if not necessarily the right solutions. When Christians object to the seamy content of non-historical social studies, they are not alone. Non-religious school clients and pragmatic elected leaders often think almost identically on matters of ethics, moral life, and character, a 1994 survey by the Public Agenda Foundation confirms. The moral health of the nation's children is a concern to an increasing number of parents, Christian and secularist alike, who object to a changed vision of human life and virtue promoted by schools. More parents than in the past are puzzled by systemic resistance to "traditional points of view" they feel are integral to the individual and social well-being, especially when this antipathy comes from educators.

But the content of non-historical social studies books is developed mainly by educators trained in psychology, the human potential movement, and health education, many of whom have limited personal respect for and knowledge of venerable cultural traditions, especially religious ones. Since these educators almost always assume that people who resist innovative curricula and textbook revision of the kind they advocate are benighted or reactionary, they make little effort to "hear" the voices of those who resist their own gospel. Thus they fuel public distrust of textbooks and alienation from education. In confusing the Christian right and broader resistance to such content being wedged into the curriculum, these educators are making a grave miscalculation.

## Reflections

The questions that all religions try to answer are basic: How shall we live? What do we deserve? Who are we? As Robert Coles of Harvard University reminded the secularized intellectual community in *The Spiritual Life of Children*, these are among "the eternal questions children ask more intensely, unremittingly, and subtly than we sometimes imagine."

Is religion just snare and delusion? In *The World We Created at Hamilton High* Gerald Grant of Syracuse University noted that parents and teachers are confused about values and moral education, as many of them are convinced that any morality is a purely individual matter. Concerning religion, Grant said, "The case has to be made anew that morality is independent of religion and that religion is neither a necessary nor a sufficient justification for the most basic, universal, ethical principles." James Q. Wilson of UCLA has similarly argued that moral sense is a function of the "instincts and habits of a lifetime, founded in nature, developed in the family, and reinforced by quite secular fears of earthly punishment and social ostracism. Habituation, as Aristotle said, is the source of most of the moral virtues. Religion is for many a source of solace and for a few a means of redemption, but if everyday morality had depended on religious conviction, the human race would have destroyed itself eons ago." (Grant, Wilson, and other social scientists *do* recognize the utilitarian power of religion in sustaining a society's "moral capital" -- and the contemporary depletion of "moral capital" in secular society.)

Grant's and Wilson's positions are at least open to argument. The question whether religion is the taproot of vital moral systems cannot be entirely ignored. As George Washington said in his celebrated Farewell Address, so influential on the builders of a national civic education: "Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of

religious principle." The religious impulse to believe in something higher than ourselves seems part of human nature, and it may be the very essence of being human. That religion is not objectively true misses the point. For many -- if not most -- people it satisfies a fundamental emotional need to feel there is more to life than what physical senses perceive. Religion has irresistible emotional appeal, for it deals with the "feeling" sphere of humanness.

As Warren A. Nord notes in *Religion and American Education: Rethinking a National Dilemma*, until the nineteenth century nothing was so influential as religion in explaining human affairs. Public understanding of war, justice, the arts, and morality were shaped and informed by religion. In many parts of the world, less secularized than the contemporary U.S., this remains the case -- and as Nord warns, we should not underestimate its impact in domestic affairs today. "The story of religious liberty is basic to our understanding of America. Growing religious pluralism makes it necessary to understand religion if we are to understand our neighbors and have peace. It shapes our moral beliefs and actions. It has addressed those 'existential' questions which are fundamental to our humanity," he explains, making the important observation that the contest between secularism and religious ways of understanding the world amounts to the most important cultural event of the last three centuries.

Religions include the effort to define, codify, and promote the good life, to separate right and wrong, to explain the cosmos and soul. Religions provide systems by which to live, which is why people defend or denounce them more passionately than mere facts and ideas. Because of their claims on the human spirit, they will inevitably affect the workings of the community and public life. The questions that religions raise -- which different cultures have dealt with in different ways and with different labels -- have shaped political, economic, cultural, and moral action since the beginning of civilization. Such aspects of the human imagination in history and contemporary society demand close study.

Textbooks are important cultural signifiers, and as symbols, they generate a great deal of controversy. For now, given the traditions and aspirations of many Americans, jurists, educators, and interest groups trying to litigate Judeo-Christian -- and all religious -- tradition out of school life will face unrelenting resistance. Religion is a "constitutive part of man's consciousness," said Daniel Bell of Harvard University in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. It grows out of the "primordial need," he said, for "a set of meanings that will establish a transcendent response to self; and the existential need to confront the finalities of suffering and death." For the faithful, religions provide a compass of human action, behavior, and outlook. They are the root of soul and cosmos. Not likely will believers quietly relinquish foundations of such power and importance in

their lives. Thus the cultural turmoil of the nation results in large part from clashing religious forces, concluded Bell, who forecast: "Despite the shambles of modern culture, some religious answer surely will be forthcoming." No doubt. But almost two decades later, what shapes the gods and cosmologies might take, what shall be worshipped in the future, that remains unclear.

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# Appendices

## A. Textbooks Examined

*Since 1988, the American Textbook Council has monitored history and social studies textbook markets. It has kept databases on the nation's leading textbooks by subject area. It has also monitored state adoptions, especially the crucial 1990 California and 1991/1994 Texas adoptions After commissioning reviews of civics and history books in 1991 and 1992, the Council broadened the review of social studies to explore emergent non-historical social studies substitutes, including psychology and "health," a therapeutic "curriculum of caring," a bundle of lessons in the life-adjustment tradition. The American Textbook Council commissioned three independent surveys of 19 widely used secondary-level books in civics, U.S. and world history, and in the case of more varied instructional materials used in non-historical social studies, the Council extended the survey into lower grades. (The Houghton Mifflin elementary program introduced in 1990 remains an exemplar for elementary-level textbook coverage on religion.) Between 1992 and 1994 the Council staff also conducted internal reviews of these books.*

### CIVICS AND U.S. HISTORY

Berkin, Carol. *American Voices: A History of the United States*. ScottForesman, 1992.
Boorstin, Daniel. *A History of the United States*. Prentice Hall, 1992.
Boyer, Paul. *Todd & Curti's The American Nation*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1995.
Bragdon, Henry W. *History of a Free Nation*. Glencoe, 1992.
DiBacco, Thomas V. *History of the United States*. Houghton Mifflin, 1991.
Divine, Robert A. *America: The People and the Dream*. ScottForesman, 1991.
Garraty, John A. *The Story of America*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1991.
Graff, Henry F. *America: The Glorious Republic*. Houghton Mifflin, 1988.
McClenaghan, William A. *Magruder's American Government*. Prentice Hall, 1991.
Nash, Gary B. *American Odyssey: The United States in the Twentieth Century*. Glencoe, 1992.
O'Connor, John R. *Exploring American History*. Globe, 1991.

### WORLD HISTORY

Beers, Burton F. *World History: Patterns of Civilization*, Prentice Hall, 1990.
Dunn, Ross E. *Links Across Time and Place: A World History*. McDougal, Littell, 1990.
Jantzen, Stephen L. *World History: Perspectives on the Past*. D.C. Heath, 1988.
Leinwand, Gerald. *The Pageant of History*. Prentice Hall, 1991.
Mazour, Anatole G. *World History: People and Nations*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.
Perry, Marvin. *History of the World*. Houghton Mifflin, 1990.
Wallbank, T. Walter. *History and Life*. ScottForesman, 1990.
Holt, Sol. *Exploring World History*. Globe, 1990.

### NON-HISTORICAL SOCIAL STUDIES

Bolin, Frances Schoonmaker. *Growing Up Caring: Exploring Values and Decision Making*. Glencoe/McGraw Hill, 1990.
Greenberg, Jerrold. *Holt Health*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1994.
Minnesota Department of Education. *Girls and Boys Getting Along: Teaching Sexual Harrassment Prevention in the Elementary Classroom*, 1993.
Harmin, Merrill. *How to Plan a Program for Moral Education*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1990.


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## B. Sample Indexes

*The following are a few representative index listings under "religion," from widely used high school textbooks considered in this survey. Analysts may disagree over listings and quarrel over the significance of omissions, such as Puritanism, but as these lists show, the radical curricular difference in social studies today is between the genre of textbook noted on this page (history) and the textbook index on the following page (non-historical social studies).*

### U.S. History

Berkin, *American Voices: A History of the United States*. ScottForesman, 1992.

in American society; Anglican Church; anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic bigotry; Christianity; Christian Science; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon Church); conflicts between Protestants and Roman Catholics; and Constitution of U.S.; and economic growth; and education in 19th century; in England; *Engle v. Vitale* (1962); fundamentalism; Great Awakening; and Hutchinson, Anne; and immigrants; Islam; Jews and Judaism; missionaries in Hawaii, Moravians; Mormons; Muslims; Nation of Islam; of Native Americans; and New England; in 1950s; in 1970s and 1980s; Pilgrims; Protestants; Puritans; Quakers; revivalism; Roman Catholics; Second Great Awakening; Separatists; women and; Yom Kippur, war during; Zen Buddhism. (*See also* religious leaders by name.)

Boyer, *Todd & Curti's The American Nation*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1995.

of African Americans; in American Revolution; and dissent; and Fundamentalism; and Great Awakening; of immigrants; in Middle Ages; and Moral Majority; and Native Americans; and Scopes trial; and Second Great Awakening; and slavery issue; and Social Gospel movement; religious revivals. (See also Roman Catholic Church; Mormons; Shakers.)

DiBacco, *History of the United States*. Houghton Mifflin, 1991.

of American Indians; and the Reformation; and education; freedom of; and Great Awakening; separation of church and state; and Second Great Awakening; Mormons; of black Americans; of immigrants; and Social Darwinism; Social Gospel; during 1920s; in 1950s; and Moral Majority; religious prejudice. (See also Catholic Church; Christianity; Church of England; Islam; Jews; Muslims; Protestants.)

Garraty, *The Story of America*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1991.

abolitionism and; revitalization during the 1970s and 1980s; fundamentalism; gospel of wealth; Great Awakening in colonial America; ideal communities; of Indians; Judeo-Christian influences on democratic institutions; political and social issues concerning; Second Great Awakening; of slaves; toleration during World War II; transcendentalism; religious freedom; religious persecution. (See also names of specific individuals; groups; and churches.)

### World History

Mazour, *World History: People and Nations*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.

in Babylonia; in early civilizations; Eastern Europe; Egypt; Greece; and philosophes; in Phoenicia; Rome; religious education (in Safavid Persia); religious liberty (in England; in Mogul Empire; in Netherlands; in Palestine; in Prussia); religious minorities (and Arabs; in Europe; and Ottomans); religious reform (of Catholic Church; after Reformation); religious wars (in France; Germany; Spain).

Wallbank, *History and Life*. ScottForesman, 1990.

in Africa; ancient; Aztec; in Benin; Buddhism; Byzantine art and; Christianity; Confucianism, and Crusades; in Egypt, ancient; and Enlightenment; in Greece, ancient; Hindu; of Indus Valley civilization; Islam; in Japan; Judaism; in Middle East; in Neolithic period; Orthodoxy and; Reformation and; Shiite Muslim and; Shintoism; Sikh; in Spanish Latin-American colonies; of Sumerians; Sunni Muslims and; Taoism; Zoroastrians. (See also Christianity; Hinduism; Jews; Islam; Orthodox Church.)

Bolin, *Growing Up Caring: Exploring Values and Decision Making*. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 1990.

*In non-historical social studies texts, abortion is never mentioned. A political taboo is thus honored. But teenage pregnancy out of wedlock is taken for granted, as is drug addiction and a catalogue of well-televised social disorders. The ethos of "feeling" and "coping" permeates, and "caring" becomes the all-purpose response to a dreadful world. In this book political and civic ideas lapse. The Bill of Rights is posed in bifurcated terms of democratic values and the rights of nonsmokers, for example, and the entry under "America" seems inappropriate and incomplete.*


AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)
Abuse
  drug
  of environment
  in a family
  sexual
Acceptance
Acid rain
Acne
Acquaintance
Actions
  consequences of
  and dealing with feelings
  and decisions
  and setting goals
  and values
  and words
Addiction
Adolescents (See also Teens)
Adolescent sexuality
  physical changes in
  pyschological changes in
Adults
Advertising
Aerobic activity
Affection
Age
Aggressiveness
AIDS (Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome disease)
  and education about
  and needles
  and sexual freedom of past
AIDS Task Force
Air
Alateen
Al-Anon
Alatot
Alcohol
Alcoholics Anonymous
Alcoholics and Alcoholism (AA)
Alcohol rehabilitation center
Alertness
Alienation
America
  and drugs
  education in
  and exercise
  hunger in
Amphetamines
"Angel dust"
Anger
Animals
Anorexia nervosa
Anxiety
Apathy
Appearance
Aptitude
Assault
Assertiveness
Athletes (see also Exercise)
Attraction
Axillary hair
Babies
  and AIDS
  born of addicts
  and pregnant women's choices
  and risks of teen mothers
Balanced diet
Barbiturates [sic]
Behavior
Bias, Len
Bias, Louise
Birth, (see also Pregnancy)
Birth control
Bill of Rights
  and democratic values
  nonsmokers
Blackmail
Blood, and AIDS
Blood pressure
Blood sugar
Body language
Braille, Louis
Bread
Breaking up
Bribery
Bulimia
Businesses
Bicycles

Caffeine
Calisthenics
Calories
Cancer
Carbohydrates
Careers
Caring about yourself
  decisions, and
  your health and
  and recovery from addiction
  threats to
  as a value
Caring about others
  communication and
  your community and
  the environment and
  your family, and
  friendship and
  in sexual relationships
  threats to
Carbon dioxide
Carbon monoxide
Challenge, and decision-making
Change
  and families
  and marriage
  physical
  psychological
Chemical dependency
Child abuse
Child care
Childhood
Children
Child Welfare Services
Chlamydia
Chloride
Choices (see also Decisions)
  and decision-making
  and drugs
  for drug treatment
  about the future
  food
  freedom and responsibility of
  and values
Cholesterol
Churches (see also Clergy members)




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## C. Four Examples

*While passages spanning all survey topics cannot be reproduced in entirety on account of space, these condensed selections on four representative topics of wide and current interest help illustrate the conclusions in the report above. The first two cover issues essential to understanding the impact of religion on twentieth century U.S. history. The third treats one of the greatest crimes of the modern era. Accounts of religion in history textbooks vary in quality and interpretation, as do accounts of the Holocaust. The fourth reflects textual efforts to deal with metaphysics and the human spirit in today's classrooms.*

### (1) U.S. History: Darwin and the Scopes Trial

The 1962 edition, Todd and Curti's *Rise of the American Nation*, the nation's leading U.S. history textbook of its time, makes no reference to Charles Darwin, his theories applied to life or society, or to the Scopes Trial. William Jennings Bryan appears only in his capacity as presidential candidate and secretary of state. Neither does the 1986 edition, *Triumph of the American Nation*. Thus textbook analyst Dan B. Fleming is correct in asserting that religion had disappeared from history textbooks at midcentury, a time that many nostalgic and historically misinformed Christians today take to be a "golden age."

DiBacco's *History of the United States* places Darwin and Social Darwinism at the start of a chapter entitled "Society and Politics in the Gilded Age." It tells how Herbert Spencer applied Darwin's ideas to society and quotes John D. Rockefeller and Baptist minister Russell H. Conwell's enthusiastic support of capitalism. Houghton Mifflin's *History of the United States* (1991) covers "The Scopes Monkey Trial" in four lucid paragraphs:

> Perhaps the most celebrated conflict between country and city values involved the theory of evolution. In 1924 the state legislature of Tennessee passed a law making it illegal "to teach any theory that denies the story of the Divine creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man is descended from a lower order of animals." A number of other states passed similar laws. Darwin's theory of evolution, which was basic to the study of modern biology, was not to be taught in those states' public schools or universities.
>
> John Scopes, a young biology teacher in Dayton, Tennessee, was one of the many educators who ignored the law and continued to teach evolution. The American Civil Liberties Union was determined to overturn the anti-evolution law. With Scopes's consent, they arranged for him to be arrested and then put together his defense. The foremost criminal lawyer in the nation, Clarence Darrow, volunteered his services as counsel for the defense. William Jennings Bryan, a whole-hearted fundamentalist and a three-time candidate for President, joined the prosecution.
>
> The trial, held during a heat wave in July 1925, drew national attention. The judge in the case made his own sympathies clear. He had a ten-foot banner hung behind his head facing the jury. It said, "READ YOUR BIBLE!" He refused to let Darrow call scientists as witnesses for the defense. They were not around during the Creation, the judge said, and their opinions would only be hearsay.
>
> To nobody's surprise, the jury found John Scopes guilty of teaching evolution and fined him $100. The Tennessee law remained in force. Bryan's side had won, yet he did not feel like a victor. Darrow had gotten the better of him a dozen times during the trial. The national press was not kind. "Once he had one leg in the White House and the nation trembled under his roars," H. L. Mencken wrote in the *Baltimore Sun*. "Now he is a tinpot pope in the Coca-Cola belt...." Bryan died only six days after the trial ended.

Garraty's *The Story of America* places the Scopes trial within the context of the fundamentalist movement. In the end Garraty points to larger lessons and social forces, still applicable to the American scene: "The Scopes trial symbolized something larger than a controversy over Darwin's theory. It emphasized the divisions within American society--rural versus urban, traditional versus modern. The rising fortunes of the late 1920s made these divisions seem deeper. Business owners and urban laborers raked in the money. Yet prosperity seemed to pass by farmers and people in small towns, leaving many of them hostile to the new urban society." This text further notes: "Fundamentalists thought that the science and technology of the machine age were challenging the traditional values and beliefs they held dear."

Textbooks in general emphasize social Darwinism, not the awesome metaphysical implications of Darwin's theories, especially in analyzing late nineteenth-century imperialism. But Garraty's *The Story of America* excels in stating Darwin's basic challenge to a literal interpretation of the Bible, noting with clarity and insight: "From Darwin's theory came the idea that human beings had slowly evolved from ape- like creatures, which of course had gradually evolved from even lower life-forms. This idea directly opposed the fundamentalist's view of God having created the heavens and the earth in six days." In the chapter on the Jazz Age, after defining Fundamentalism, the book devotes several paragraphs to the Scopes trial, saying it "exposed a deep division in American society between traditional religious values and new values based on scientific ways of thought." It concludes: "press accounts of the trial, which often portrayed Bryan and his cause as narrow-minded, colored many people's views of Fundamentalism." Berkin's *American Voices* defines fundamentalism as "the belief in a literal interpretation of the Bible," leaving the larger implications of the movement unstated. Following sections on the revival of the Ku Klux Klan and on Prohibition, the text draws larger lessons: "The Scopes trial exposed the intolerance common in the United States of the 1920s. However, as with the red scare, Ku Klux Klan, and Prohibition, the reactionary forces of fundamentalism eventually declined. The people calling for a return to an America of white, native-born Protestants simply could not compete with the realities of a rapidly urbanizing society," reflecting its interpretive conclusions about old-time religion.

*American Voices* emphasizes the media circus that attended the Scopes Trial at cost to explaining the crucial issues symbolized in the affair: "... stands selling hot dogs and lemonade filled the sidewalks, and little cotton apes appeared in windows. When the trial opened, it became the first ever carried on radio. In addition, loudspeakers relayed the courtroom action to the thousands of people camped out on the courthouse lawn. Journalists then sent the news out to an excited American public." *American Voices* concludes that fundamentalism declined after the trial but *The Story of America* says that fundamentalism flourished. *The Story of America* skillfully links the religious and moral fervor of the 1920s with the contemporary American scene: "...the vigor has not left the movement. Conservative church groups are the most rapidly growing segment of American Protestantism. Although their message and methods are different today, fundamentalists still seek to be heard by the American people. Through television they reach their widest audience ever. Many of the groups have become politically involved, taking active roles in a variety of movements."

**(2) U.S. History: Protestantism since 1960**

Overall, the treatment of religion in the contemporary United States is superficial and unsatisfactory, dealing with it exclusively as a political entity. Coverage may focus on a nefarious character like Jerry Falwell. Do textbooks make clear that religious conflict in the United States today is not interdenominational so much as it is between "people of faith" and secularists? Not at all. It may be noted here that in these telegraphic passages a student will find *abortion* mentioned but no more. [Health books simply omit the subject. The reason for this oversight is obvious enough. Any textbook daring to present abortion as any kind of option for pregnant girls or women would be driven off the market by anti-abortion forces.] No book describes this or other sources of religious unease among conservatives, and the emphasis on social progress is elsewhere and secular. DiBacco's *History of the United States*, in a section on the Reagan years, for example, states blankly:

> Religion, especially evangelical Christianity, played a key part in the growing strength of conservatism. The 1970s brought a huge religious revival, especially among fundamentalist sects. In 1963 about one-fourth of Americans described themselves as 'born-again' Christians. By 1980 that percentage had almost doubled. Each week about 100 million Americans watched television evangelists or listened to them on radio.

Berkin's *American Voices*, under the heading "Many Americans turned toward religion in the 1970s and 1980s," also covers the topic from the angle of political initiative:

> Jerry Falwell, a Baptist fundamentalist minister in Virginia, attracted wide publicity by forming a political organization he called the Moral Majority. The Moral Majority as well as other evangelical organizations promoted conservative causes such as the restoration of prayer to public schools, an end to federal interference in local affairs, restoration of bans on abortion, and a strong American military.

Boyer's *Todd and Curti's The American Nation* links religion and politics:

> Ronald Reagan and the New Right shared the same political goals. Both supported school prayer, a strong defense, and free-market economic policies. Both opposed abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment, gun control, and busing to end racial segregation in schools.

Nash's *American Odyssey* states:

> Many of Reagan's domestic and foreign policies were inspired by the beliefs of the religious right. He opposed the Equal Rights Amendment for women. He desired a constitutional amendment banning abortion. These decisions were supported by conservative Christians who believed in traditional Christian roles for women and who favored discrimination against homosexuals. Points of view other than those embraced by the religious right had little influence on Reagan's legislative agenda.

This passage is open to dispute and the last sentence is incorrect. What no major textbook explores well are the sources of moral panic in contemporary domestic affairs and the resulting political response on the part of religious or "social" conservatives. No wonder one reviewer exclaimed:

> As American historians have sought to come to grips with the impact of the "new social history" on the discipline, numerous questions have arisen. Many, many aspects of "everyday life" are included in such surveys: the history of work as well as of leisure; the history of upper and lower classes; "cultural" topics ranging from the Chicago Exposition of 1893 to the Beatles' Yellow Submarine; art history subjects from the Hudson River Valley to the Ashcan Schools. The range of topics is impressive, enlightening the student to the existence of areas of life that he may only have dimly suspected existed. Yet, in all of this, the subject of religion is strangely missing. For a nation whose daily life has been pervaded by its worship and expression of faith, this is truly peculiar.

**(3) World History: The Holocaust**

One of the most devastating events of modern history is the Holocaust, for which a terrible new word was invented, *genocide*, and an event that has deeply affected humanists, progressive liberalism, and human rights since 1945. The survey found that world history texts evaluated in the 1994 American Textbook Council publication, *History Textbooks: A Standard and Guide*, covered the Holocaust with different degrees of skill (and generally in line with overall book quality). Several passages are adequate or more. But only one of them, Wallbank's *History and Life* provided explicit historical context of anti-Semitism through centuries of European history in an earlier passage:

> The crusades unleashed a strong religious reaction against Jews, as they did against all nonconformists and heretics.... As a result, the Jewish people of Western Europe were attacked, barred from guilds, and banned from most crafts.... The intolerance reached its height in the 13th and 14th centuries when anti-Jewish laws were passed by the Church. This was followed by violent attacks on Jewish communities, and the expulsion of all Jews from England, France, and parts of Germany.

*History and Life* covers the subject of the Holocaust in some detail:

> Both Japan and Germany forced their conquered peoples to work for them as slave laborers. As soon as they made conquests, the Nazis began to raid the economies of the subjugated countries for the benefit of Germany. This reorganization of Europe was called the "New Order." Thus, vast quantities of Soviet grain, French crops, and Romanian oil were shipped to Germany, and 7 million foreign workers were sent to Germany as slaves.In the conquered lands, the Nazis used ruthless terror to control the local people. The horrors of Nazi rule were especially brutal against the slavic peoples--Poles, Russians, Czechs, Yugoslavs--who were considered to be "inferior" peoples destined to serve the Nazis as slaves. More than 3 million people from the Soviet Union alone died in German prison camps.... Gypsies and Jews were marked for total annihilation. Since the 1920's, Hitler had encouraged the already existing anti-Semitism in Germany in order to gain power and inflame the people with Nazi ideas. Jews were made the scapegoats for the signing of the Versailles Treaty and for every economic failure between the two wars.

In the early years of the war, special Nazi execution squads, called the SS, shot hundreds of thousands of Jewish men, women, and children in Poland and the Soviet Union. In 1942 the Nazis put into action a monstrous plan called the **Final Solution**, a carefully devised program to kill all the Jews of Europe. Deep inside Poland, special death camps equipped with poison gas chambers and cremating ovens were built especially to kill and dispose of the bodies of millions of people. The largest of these death camps was Auschwitz [oush'vits], where between 2 and 3 million Jews and hundreds of thousands of Poles, Russians, Czechs, Yugoslavs, Gypsies, and anti-Nazi Germans were brutally murdered....

Several other textbook passages contain descriptive and moving accounts. Jantzen's *World History: Perspectives on the Past* includes a horrifying account of the mass murders:

The most frightful example of war against civilians took place under the Nazis. Hitler's government turned the machinery of war against whole groups of civilians, especially the Jews. Nazis divided humankind into two groups--a "master race" composed of Aryans (Germanic peoples) and a lesser race composed of everyone else. Hitler planned to enslave the non-Aryan peoples of Europe such as the Russians and the Poles. However, he had other plans for the group he hated most, the Jews. Soon after coming to power, Hitler deprived German Jews of their property and political rights. Later, as one country after another came under German control, Hitler set out to achieve what he called the "final solution"--the total destruction of the Jewish people.

Beginning in 1941, Hitler began a program of **genocide**--the killing of an entire people. Millions of Jews from all parts of Europe fell under Hitler's power. Nazi officers arrested whole families of Jews, simply because they were Jews, and crammed them into railroad boxcars. Carload after carload rolled toward special prisons known as concentration camps. These tightly guarded prisons were run by black-uniformed guards from a special Nazi army unit, the SS.

The SS leaders prided themselves on the efficiency with which they carried out Hitler's wishes to destroy the Jews. When the victims arrived, they were divided into two groups. In one group were those judged healthy enough to do heavy labor for the Nazi Reich. In the other were those who were to die at once. Always included in this second group were babies, young children, and aging grandparents. They might be shot, bayoneted, or gassed. Any who were merely wounded were buried alive. At some camps, those selected for death were stripped of their clothes and herded into a chamber that their guards called a shower room. With chilling candor, the director of the Auschwitz (**owsh**-vits) camp in Poland described his system for killing people.

*I used Zyklon B, which was a crystallized prussic acid, which we dropped into the death chamber from a small opening. It took 3 to 15 minutes to kill the people in the death chamber, depending upon climatic conditions. We knew when the people were dead because their screaming stopped. We usually waited about a half hour before we opened the doors and removed the bodies.*

In such ways, Nazi officials at Auschwitz and 30 other death camps killed thousands of people a day.Before World War II, there were about 11 million Jews living in Europe. By the end of the war, about 6 million had been deliberately and systematically murdered by the Nazis. Today, this horrible destruction is known as the Holocaust.

Beers's *World History: Patterns of Civilization* is equally effective in shorter compass:

One effect of the war was not fully discovered until late in the war. When Allied troops marched into Germany, they saw the result of the policy that Hitler had called the "final solution of the Jewish question"--the total extermination of Jews in Europe.In some areas occupied by Nazis, all the Jews of a town had been shot and buried in a mass grave. At Babi Yar in the Ukraine, for example, 33,000 Jews from Kiev were killed in two days. Mass executions by shooting were too slow for the Nazis, so they built huge camps for the express purpose of killing people. The most notorious death camps were Auschwitz, Maidaneck, and Treblinka in Poland and Dachau in Germany. Nazis shipped trainloads of Jews to these camps from all over Europe. There, the Jews were stripped, forced into special chambers, and gassed. Altogether, some 6 million Jews died in what has come to be called the **Holocaust** -- the systematic murder of Jews carried out by the Nazis. Jews were not the only victims of the Nazi death camps. Many others -- Slavs, Gypsies, the physically and mentally disabled, and political prisoners -- were also killed.



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Leinwand's *The Pageant of World History*, generally a text of some quality, contains a jumpy and poorly written passage that adds up to very little:

> Hitler's belief in a "master race" and his hatred of Jews led eventually to the deaths of 6 million Jews, both in Germany and in the lands he conquered. He was determined not only to drive the Jews out of Germany but also to wipe them out as a people. Hitler had Jews rounded up and shipped to concentration camps where they were killed immediately or imprisoned and systematically murdered. Torture, medical experiments, and the gas chamber were used in an effort to exterminate all Jews. The *New York Times* quoted an eyewitness to these atrocities: "He saw his family battered to death with Nazi rifle butts and he saw countless other Jewish men, women, and children shot, clubbed, drowned, gassed, burned, and turned into fertilizer and laundry soap."
>
> In the minds of many Germans, the Jewish people were being punished for causing Germany's economic troubles. Although this was irrational, the Jews became the scapegoats for the problems in German society. A **scapegoat** is a person, group, or thing that is wrongfully blamed for the mistakes or crimes of others. One of Hitler's lieutenants, Adolf Eichmann (IKE mahn), was given the responsibility of providing a "final solution to the Jewish question." For Hitler, this phrase meant that the Jews were to be destroyed as a people. Today, people often use the word *holocaust* to describe the Nazi's destruction of European Jews. The world had never seen such inhuman and barbaric methods of killing and torture as Hitler devised. The enormity of his crime was beyond any description. A new word, **genocide** (JEN uh side), was coined to describe such a deliberate attempt to wipe out an entire religious or racial group.
>
> Under the Nazis, other groups were persecuted as well. Slavs, gypsies, political prisoners, and the disabled were often killed in the same manner as were the Jews. Protestant and Catholic clergy suffered for protesting inhumane behavior. For example, Pastor Martin Niemoller, a German Lutheran, was arrested and sent to a concentration camp for opposing Hitler. Priests found it difficult and at times impossible to hold church services or to perform the rites of the Roman Catholic Church. Many of them were arrested for what Hitler called "meddling in political affairs." Increasingly, Christianity itself came under attack since it taught kindness, mercy, humility, and self-sacrifice--virtues scorned by the Nazis.

Holt's *Exploring World History*, an easy reader for slower learners, verges on the incoherent, since this is the only time the text refers directly to the subject:

> 8. At the center of the judge's bench at the Nuremberg war-crimes trials sat a short, balding man. At home in England, he had a long career as a judge. At Nuremberg he was the president, or head, of the three judges who tried the cases against the Nazi leaders. His name was Sir Geoffrey Lawrence. The Nazi leaders on trial were accused of terrible crimes. The court defined these crimes as "crimes against peace" and "crimes against humanity."
> 9. The most horrible of these crimes was the torture and murder of 6 million Jews in German concentration camps. This inhuman action against the Jewish people became known as the **holocaust** (HOL-uh-kawst). The interest of the whole world was focused on the trial. Lawrence listened carefully and conducted the trial fairly. The Nazis' main defense was that they were only doing their duty and following orders. Lawrence and the other judges, however, ruled there were moral laws that came before duty to any nation; obeying orders was no excuse. Lawrence was praised for the way he conducted the trial, but he never became famous. The Nuremberg Trial, however, will always be a reminder that laws and orders that violate higher moral laws must never be obeyed.

*Exploring World History* attempts aggressively to link past and present. A much earlier section, one that introduces the Jewish religion before the common era, concludes:

> The Jewish people who are the descendants of the Hebrews always hoped to return to Palestine some day. Finally, in 1948, the Jewish people established an independent nation in Israel. What do you think caused the Jewish people to found their new nation in this land of the Middle East? What does this tell you about the power of history and religion in people's lives?

But students have not yet studied Zionism or the Holocaust at this point. More important, perhaps, how are these students to answer the final question, given the absence of any explanation in the text (and probably) contemporary school life?

Textbooks generally treat the establishment of Israel in 1948 in separate sections in the context of "the Middle East since 1945," mentioning the Holocaust as a cause but avoiding candid coverage of religious-based enmity in the Middle East during the last fifty years.

**(4) Wellness and Religion**

Non-historical social studies do not always ignore religion. Sometimes they try to put it in a contemporary frame and context. Consider the section entitled "A Spiritual Life" in a leading text, *Holt Health*, which includes an empty and evasive summary of religion and its place in human life:

> Many people find that having a spiritual life--a sense of connection with something greater than oneself--helps them get through times of great stress. Some people believe in a supreme being who provides comfort and guidance during hard times. And some people feel a strong connection with nature, which gives them a feeling of peace and a sense that they are part of a beautiful world. These are both ways of having a spiritual life. There are numerous other ways, perhaps as many as there are people.
>
> Organized religions can help people deal with stress not only by offering spiritual guidance, but also by helping people feel part of a community. In this way, members of churches, synagogues, and other religious communities may find the support group they need to cope with the stressors in their lives.
>
> Some people would not call themselves "spiritual," but they feel that their life has a purpose--to help relieve the suffering of others, for example, or simply to act with honesty and integrity. Believing that one's life has purpose and meaning can get a person through the worst of times.

The most significant aspect of this empty passage is tone, an anemic one, useless, unmoving and uninspiring for the young person looking for cosmic answers. Chapel and school prayer are gone. The support group has taken its place, alongside other therapeutic forms to give students something to cope with "stressors," but utterly nothing to cope with existential meaning and personal virtue. *Holt Health* makes its psychologizing and reforming intentions clear in its thematic introduction, which begins with a section entitled "Self-Esteem and Wellness":

> In order to achieve wellness, you have to feel good about yourself. Feeling good about yourself is called having positive self-esteem. You can be free of disease, you can get good grades in school, you can have nice friends, and be physically fit, but if you don't feel good about yourself you have not reached a state of wellness.

The follow-up section is called "Wellness Involves Social Support." Appalling and fatuous in construction, it is animated by the curriculum of caring:

> It is quite clear to people in the health profession that people need people. In fact, there is a name given to the benefits one gets from talking to others about joys, sorrows, problems, and stressors. It's called social support. It is now well known that a lot of stress in your life can make you physically sick. However, if you have social support, it is more likely you'll be able to manage stressors without becoming ill. Hasn't there been a time when you felt better about a bad situation after discussing it with a friend or relative? Throughout this course you will be encouraged to seek the help or advice of someone you can trust when you are having a problem. The purpose of this course is to give you a set of skills that will enable you to live a healthy lifestyle. Employing these skills when needed throughout your life keeps you on the path to wellness.

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